

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Wichita Mountains

*Wildlife Refuge*

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge  
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Southwest Region  
[www.fws.gov/southwest](http://www.fws.gov/southwest)

For information on the  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
1 800/344- WILD

Oklahoma State Relay System  
1 800/722-0353

*American Bison.* Ryan Hagerty / USFWS

August 2013







*Mount Scott.*  
Elise Smith/USFWS

## Welcome to the Wichitas

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge – wild, rugged, and weathered – is a symbol of the old west standing at the threshold of modern times. For centuries, this remarkable land was the province of a few nomadic hunters and food gatherers. Today the refuge serves everyone by conserving part of America’s national wildlife heritage.

The natural attractions of the refuge are many and varied. In addition to viewing and photographing wildlife in their natural setting, visitors find the lakes, streams, canyons, mountains, and grasslands ideal for hiking, fishing, and other outdoor activities.

## Refuge Headquarters

Headquarters are located 25 miles northwest of Lawton, Oklahoma, and serve as administrative offices on weekdays. Hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

A 24-hour emergency telephone is located at the rear of the refuge headquarters office along with an accessible entrance.



*Refuge Visitor Center.*  
USFWS

## Visitor Center



The Refuge Visitor Center is located at the junction of State Highways 115 and 49. Dioramas and hands-on exhibits complement fine art, sculptures, and exquisite taxidermy. The four major habitat types, rocklands, aquatic, mixed-grass prairie, and cross timbers, are highlighted. A night exhibit reveals the sounds after dark, while a history rail overlooks mountain scenery from picture windows. The auditorium presents programs throughout the day. There is no fee for visiting the center. Maps, books, pamphlets, and other information on wildlife and wildlands are available in the center’s bookstore/gift shop.

The America the Beautiful Pass can be obtained from the Visitor Center.

## Visitor Center Hours

Open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily.  
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas,  
and New Year’s Day.

## Picnicking



Boulder, Lost Lake, Sunset, and Mt. Scott provide visitors with a variety of settings for picnicking. Picnic hours are posted at area entrances. Help keep the refuge beautiful by putting all trash in convenient dumpsters located at each area.

For group picnics (20 to 60 people), the Boulder Cabin area may be reserved by contacting the Visitor Center. Accessible sites and restrooms are available at Boulder and Sunset picnic areas.



*Doris Campground.*  
USFWS

## General Camping



Doris Campground, west of the Visitor Center, is fully developed with water, fire grills, fire grates, picnic tables, sanitary dump station, shower/restroom facility, tent sites, limited electrical hookups, and trailer spaces. Three group camp sites are available by reservation through the Visitor Center. Sites are first come – first served. This is a fee area. The America the Beautiful Senior Pass (62+) and Access Pass (disabled) are honored for a 50% camping discount.

The Fawn Creek Youth Campground offers 4 group camp sites for organized youth groups including universities. The primitive camp sites can accommodate up to 30 people each, and can be reserved through the Visitor Center.

## Backcountry Camping

Backcountry camping in the Charons Garden Wilderness Area is by reservation/permit only. To protect the area, it is necessary to limit the number of permits at one time to 10. Length of stay is two nights/three days. Reservations can be made through the Visitor Center.



*Joys of hiking.* © George Bishop

## Trails and Hiking



The refuge has 15 miles of designated hiking trails that offer the novice and the seasoned hiker a rewarding experience. The trails wind through scrub oak forest, across rocky mountains, and over grassy prairie. Wildlife abounds along these trails.

The Dog Run Hollow Trail System, a part of the National Recreation Trail System, has trailheads at French Lake, Boulder, Lost Lake, and the Dog Run Hollow parking areas. Using the French Lake trailhead, visitors may choose among a 1-, 2-, or 4-hour hike through some of the more unique areas of the refuge.

The Congressionally designated Charons Garden Wilderness Area offers hikers an opportunity to test their skills in challenging terrain. In keeping with the wilderness designation, the trails are primitive and are frequently confused with game trails. Be prepared before entering the Wilderness Area. Carry adequate water, wear sturdy shoes, allow extra time for the rugged and often confusing conditions. Trails lead to the summit of Elk Mountain, connect Post Oak Lake and Sunset Lake, and lead into the backcountry camping and Twin Rocks/Crab Eyes area. Consult a trail map or discuss plans with a Refuge staff person before traveling.

Numerous other trails are available including the Little Baldy Trail, which leads from the Quanah Parker Lake dam to the summit of Little Baldy Mountain. A side trail from the Doris Campground joins this trail on the western edge of the lake.



*Fishing on Quanah Parker Lake.*  
Elise Smith/USFWS

## Boating



Hand powered boats are permitted on Jed Johnson, Rush, Quanah Parker, and French Lakes. Electric trolling motors are permitted on boats 14' and less in length on these same lakes. Any size boat or motor and sailboats are permitted on Lake Elmer Thomas, but there is a no-wake rule across the entire surface of the lake. Operators of motorized boats must use designated boat ramps.

## Fishing



Fishing, in accordance with state and federal regulations, is permitted in all of the refuge lakes in the public use area (see map). Largemouth bass, sunfish, bluegill, crappie, and catfish can be found in refuge lakes.

Fish may be taken only with poles and lines or rods and reels. Anglers may use tube type floaters, life jackets, or buoyant vests. Wading is permitted when fishing. Taking bait, frogs, or turtles from refuge waters is prohibited. Fishing tournaments allowed by permit only.

## Hunting



Accessible fishing piers are available near the Environmental Education Center and Lake Elmer Thomas.

Annual controlled hunts for white-tailed deer and elk are conducted. The application process and random drawings are administrated through the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Applications must be submitted in April. For all regulations, contact the Refuge.

## Tours and Special Programs

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge offers many unique programs and tours, some of which venture into the Special Use Area of the refuge. A current schedule of programs is available at the Visitor Center, on the Refuge website, or by visiting [www.friendsofthewichitas.org](http://www.friendsofthewichitas.org).



*Hollis Canyon.*  
F. Bryce/USFWS

**Environmental Education**  
Classes covering most natural resource related subjects can be scheduled by calling the Visitor Center.

**Enjoy the Refuge Safely**  
Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is a natural and wild area. Visitors must be prepared to meet nature on its terms. Due to open range management, motorists must drive defensively and be alert for

hazards caused by wandering buffalo, longhorn, deer, and elk. Reduced night speed is enforced because of the difficulty of seeing wildlife on the roads at night.



## A Few Simple Rules



To protect wildlife, please observe posted speed limits.

Motorized vehicles are allowed only on developed roads and parking areas. Driving on roads closed by sign or barrier is prohibited. ATVs and UTVs are not allowed. Vehicles found parked in closed areas, or in any area after the hours of authorized activity, will be impounded.



Picnicking and cooking fires are allowed in designated areas only. Fires must be built in grates and grills and dead fallen timber may be gathered (no saws). Fires must not be left unattended and must be completely extinguished before leaving the area.



Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge should be a quiet place to enjoy nature. Please leave radios and loud sound equipment at home. Fireworks are prohibited.



Alcoholic beverages, drugs, and drug paraphernalia prohibited.



Help us protect wildlife habitat – swimming, snorkeling, and wading are prohibited.



Keep wild things wild – collection of rocks, animals, minerals, bones, and antlers is prohibited.



Aircraft landings and take-offs are prohibited. This includes but is not limited to: sail planes, hang-gliders, hot air balloons, paragliders, and parasails. Kites and remote controlled aircraft are also prohibited.

Use of metal detectors or any activities that involve searching for, collecting or disturbing artifacts or treasures is prohibited.



Keep pets on a leash or consider leaving them at home.



Show you care...Feeding wildlife is prohibited.

Bicycles are allowed only on paved roads and on the Mt. Scott Bicycle Trail. Bicycles are prohibited on other trails.

The use of skates, skateboards, longboards, lugeboards and other similar devices is prohibited.

Camping is allowed only in designated areas and all campers must have a permit.

Hiking is limited to daylight hours only.

Nighttime use on the Refuge is restricted to fishing or permitted activities.

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of state and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32).

Individuals that participate in hunting and fishing activities or who have a special use permit for collection on the Refuge are subject to inspection of all harvested resources, licenses, permits, vehicles, containers, packs, bags etc., that are used in support of these permitted activities.

Special Use Permits are required for all special events and commercial activities. Some of the uses requiring a permit include, but are not limited to: commercial photography, scuba diving instruction, fishing tournaments and rock climbing classes.

***Buffalo and longhorn can be dangerous!***

*Keep your distance.*

## Wichita Mountains WR Facts

*When was it  
established?*

The Refuge was first established in 1901 as a Forest Reserve by President William McKinley just prior to the area being opened to settlement. In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt re-designated the area as the Wichita Forest and Game Preserve. Congress designated the Wichita Mountains as a National Wildlife Refuge in 1936.

*How big is it?*

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge includes 59,020 acres located in Comanche County in Southwestern Oklahoma.

*How old are the  
Mountains*

The granite mountains were formed over 500 million years ago.

*Wildlife  
Reintroductions?*  
American bison

In 1907, 15 bison were brought back to the southern plains by railcar from the New York Bronx Zoo. The refuge bison herd is presently maintained at 650 head.

Elk

One bull elk was released on the Refuge in 1908. Twenty more cows and bulls were brought from the Jackson Hole area in 1911 and 1912. About 700 elk range on the Refuge today.

Texas longhorn  
cattle

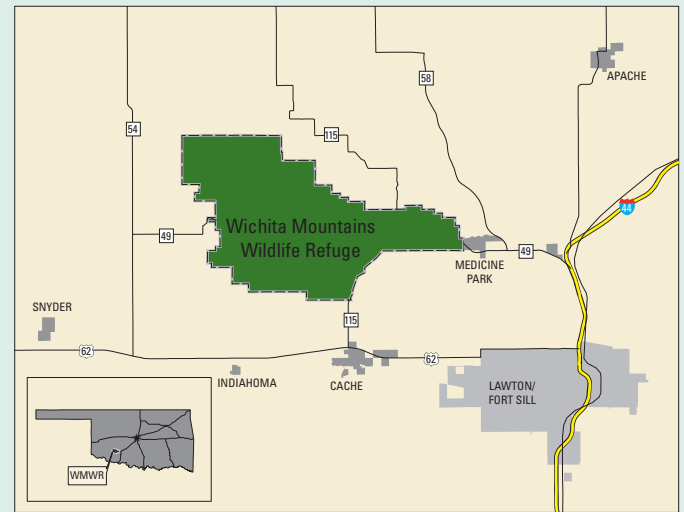
In 1927, the Sixty-ninth Congress appropriated funds to purchase 30 longhorns. The herd now numbers about 300 head.

*Facility  
development*

The CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) were instrumental in the 1930's in constructing 15 concrete dams for permanent water areas and most of the 8-foot high big game boundary fence.

*Visitors*

The Refuge attracts over 1.5 million visitors each year.



## Wildlife Watching Tips

Dawn and dusk are the best times to see wildlife.

In warmer climates, little is moving on hot summer afternoons or on windy days.

Observe from the sidelines. Leave “abandoned” young animals alone. A parent is probably close by waiting for you to leave.

Don’t offer snacks; your lunch could disrupt wild digestive systems.

Cars make good observation blinds.

Use binoculars or a long lens for a closer look.

Try sitting quietly in one good location. Let wildlife get used to your presence. Many

hidden animals will reappear once they think you are gone. Walk quietly in designated areas.

Be aware of sounds. Often you will hear more than you will see.

Teach children quiet observation. Other wildlife watchers will appreciate your consideration.

Look for animal signs. Tracks, scat, feathers, and nests left behind often tell interesting stories.

## Trail Information

No.	Name	Distance One-way	Difficulty Rating
1.	Mt. Scott Bike Trail	5.8 miles	Easy
2.	Jed Johnson Tower	0.5 miles	Easy-Moderate
3.	Burma Road	8.0 miles	Easy
4.	EE Center (accessible)	0.1 miles	Easy
5.	Quanah Parker Lake	0.4 miles	Easy
6.	Little Baldy Trail	0.8 miles	Easy-Moderate
7.	Osage Lake	0.6 miles	Easy
8.	Burford Lake	0.5 miles	Easy
9.	The Narrows	0.8 miles	Moderate
10.	Kite Trail	1.1 miles	Easy
11.	Bison Trail	6.0 miles	Easy
12.	Longhorn Trail	1.5 miles	Easy
13.	Elk Trail	0.7 miles	Easy
14.	Elk Mountain	1.1 miles	Moderate-Difficult
15.	Charons Garden	2.4 miles	Moderate-Difficult
16.	Wilderness Camping Trail (camp by reservation only)	1.0 miles	Easy-Moderate

## Hiking Tips

- Got water? You need 16 oz./hour in hot weather.
- Got shoes? Snakes and cactus abound.
- Know your route? Game trails can look like hiking trails.
- Use common sense—budget plenty of time to get back before dark.
- Be mindful—the Refuge is surprisingly rugged and remote. Longhorn and bison can be dangerous. Help is hours away.
- Bring plenty of sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Snakes, ticks, and poison ivy are common on the refuge.
- We allow hiking anywhere in the Public Use Area during daylight hours only.
- For more information on hiking or backcountry camping, call the Visitor Center at 580/429-2197 or visit our website at [www.fws.gov/refuges/Wichita\\_Mountains](http://www.fws.gov/refuges/Wichita_Mountains)

## Leave No Trace

Practice Leave No Trace principles:  
Carry out your trash and any other trash you see.  
Protect *your* public lands.

## Warning

The Charons Garden Wilderness Area is managed as a primitive unit. Be prepared. Trails are not signed or maintained, game trails crisscross the area, and you will encounter extremely rugged terrain. Medivac flights occur in Charons Garden every year.



*Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge offers hiking opportunities for all ages. / USFWS*

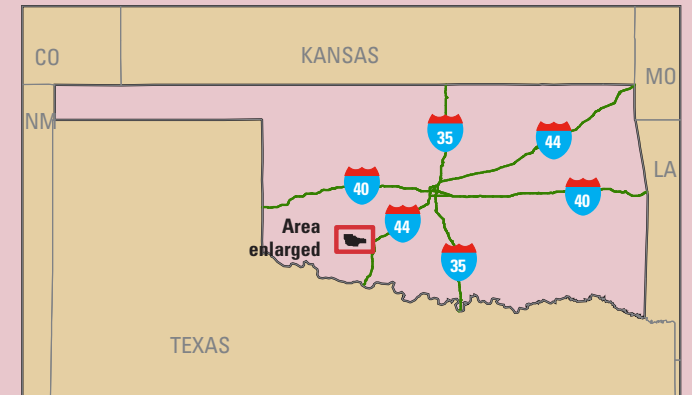


*Group hiking during Nature Quest. / USFWS*



# WICHITA MOUNTAINS WILDLIFE REFUGE INDIAHOMA, OKLAHOMA

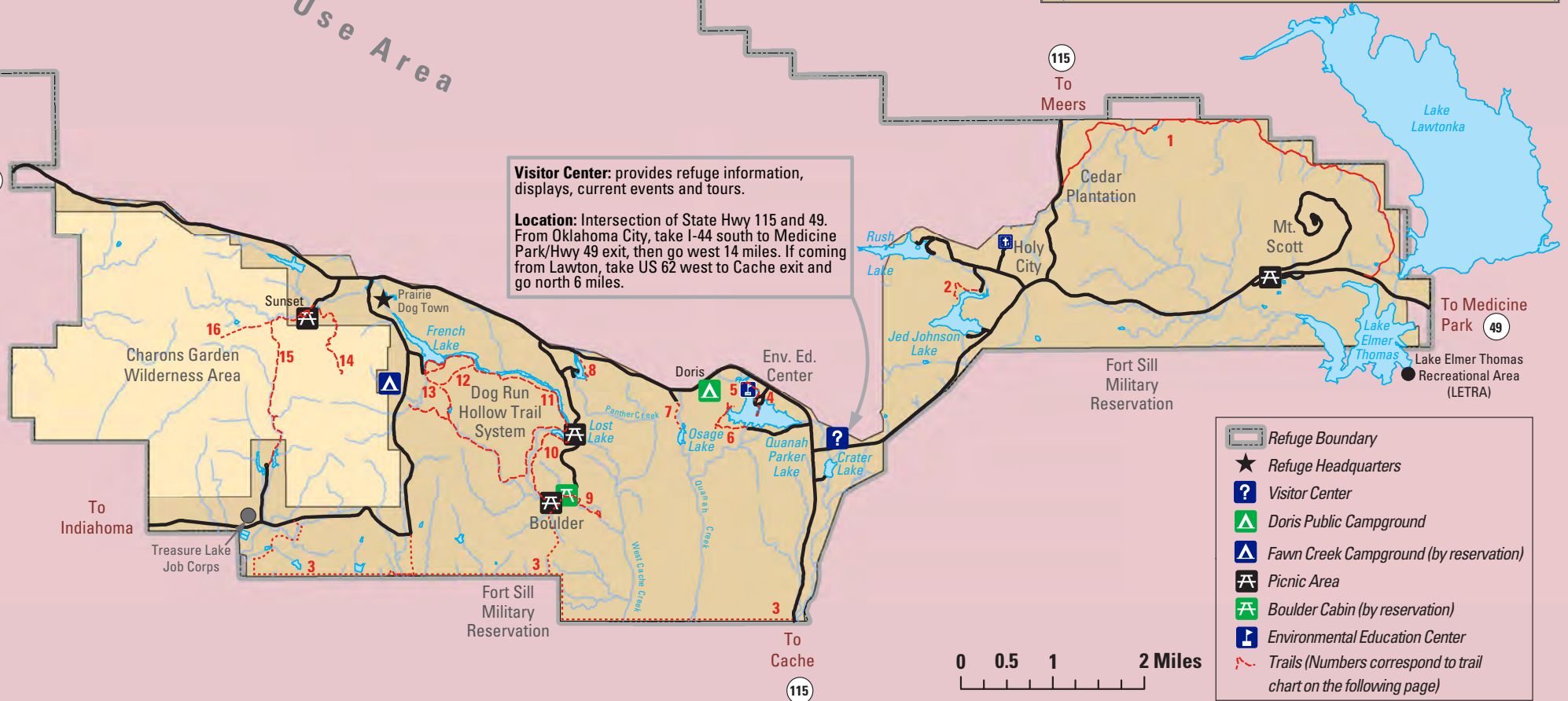
Special Use Area



**Visitor Center:** provides refuge information, displays, current events and tours.

**Location:** Intersection of State Hwy 115 and 49. From Oklahoma City, take I-44 south to Medicine Park/Hwy 49 exit, then go west 14 miles. If coming from Lawton, take US 62 west to Cache exit and go north 6 miles.

49



- Refuge Boundary
- Refuge Headquarters
- Visitor Center
- Doris Public Campground
- Fawn Creek Campground (by reservation)
- Picnic Area
- Boulder Cabin (by reservation)
- Environmental Education Center
- Trails (Numbers correspond to trail chart on the following page)